Scathing report on the state of child labour in India

794. DR. NAUNIHALSINGH : Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether US Government has issued a scathing report on the state of child labour in India and if so, what are the details thereof;

(b) what is the total number of working children in India and what number is working in the export oriented industries

(c) whether it is a fact that the major export industries which employ children are hand-knotted carpets, gemstone polishihg, glass and glassware and footwear if so, the number of working children in each;

(d) whether Gen Harkin introduced the Child Labour Deferrence Act which called for a halt to the importation of goods produced by children under the age of 15;

(e) whether Government realize that US action will serve as a double edged sword, in that, export will decline and child labour would be losing supplementary income to their families; and

(f) if so, what steps have been taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI P. A. SANGMA): (a) Yes, Sir. According to information received from Ministry of External Affairs, there is a US Government report on the use of child labour in American imports which, inter alia, contains a reports on the child labour situation in India. The report refers to child labour in export industries i.e. hand-knotted carpets, gem stone polishing, brassware and base metal articles, glass and glass ware, footware, silk, matches and fire works. It also gives information on national child labour laws, international conventions relating to employment of children and programmes and efforts to address child labour including inter alia the National Child Labour Projects.

(b) and (c) Child Labour population estimated with reference to the National Sample Survey of 1987, is 17.02 million, Separate figures about children working in export oriented industries is not maintained.

(d) According to information received from Ministry of External Affairs, Senator Tom Harkins moved a Bill in March, 1993, seeking to ban import into the USA of goods made by utilisation of child labour. This Bill did not come up for consideration in October, 1993 as expected but remains on the agenda of the US Congress.

(e) and (f) The Government is keeping a close watch on the developments.

Nation-wide strike held on 14th July, 1994

795. SHRI T. VENKATRAM REDDY: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have assessed the estimated loss suffered by the Public Sector Undertakings as a result of one day Nation-Wide strike held on July 14, 1994; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI P. A. SANGMA): (a) and (b) Information is being collected and will be laid on the table of the House.